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UNCLAS ABUJA 001332

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: NIGERIA: CHAMBAS BRIEFING ON LIBERIA

1. On August 6, ECOWAS ExecSec Chambas briefed the diplomatic corps on the developments in the deployment of ECOMIL forces. Chambas informed the group that an open account had been established with ECOBANK in Accra, and that the account number would be circulated shortly. Paralleling ECOMICI, Chambas also indicated that a request would be made to the U.S. and U.K. to provide one staff member each who are experts in accounting for military operations. He acknowledged the USD 10 million that the U.S. had already distributed to the contractor PAE for lift and other services. Septel follows on Chambas, meeting with Charge.

2. Chambas stated that all political issues regarding the governmental transition in Liberia had been resolved, except for naming the President and Vice President. He claimed that all sides had agreed to the proposal that no member of the belligerents would be allowed to take either of these positions. A complete transition to a new elected government is expected to take 18-24 months.

3. Chambas stated that NIBATT 1 would complete its deployment by Saturday August 9, and NIBATT 2 would finish early next week. The third (Ghana, Mali and Senegal) and fourth (Guinea-Bissau, Gambia, Togo and Benin) battalions would be completely deployed by the end of August. The maximum number of troops to be deployed is 3250. (COMMENT: This number appears to be a moving target, and Chambas mentioned 2400 as the target to Charge earlier in the week. END COMMENT)
LIBERI